

Audioscript

Listening comprehension

*For items 1–10 listen to a lecture about language and gender and decide whether the statements (1–10) are **TRUE (A)**, or **FALSE (B)** according to the text you hear. You will hear the text twice.*

You have 20 seconds to study the statements.
(pause 20 seconds)

Now we begin.

It's common knowledge that men and women do things differently, isn't it? The male of the species, we're told, goes quiet and retreats into a cave to brood at the slightest sign of stress, whilst the female reaches out and shares her feelings. After all, women are better communicators, aren't they? That's certainly what writers like John Gray would have us believe, but on what basis do they make this argument? And does it matter?

It's easy to assume these books must be based on valid scientific research, but in reality very few are. Indeed, even a cursory inspection of the literature of linguistics and gender reveals that men and women communicate in remarkably similar ways.

Take the notion that women talk more. A book in 2007 reported that women used 20,000 words a day and men just 7,000, but when the claim was challenged, the author, Louann Brizendine, couldn't provide a source and promised to withdraw it from later editions.

In fact, research in the journal *Science* has shown both sexes talk equally as much, and in doing so use on average 16,000 words per day. There's obviously a huge variety - from 500 to 45,000 words a day - but significantly, the three chattiest people in the study were all men!

Then there's the belief that men interrupt more because they are biologically more aggressive and programmed to use language more competitively. Evidence from Janet Hyde actually suggests that in neutral situations, where people speak on equal terms, women and men interrupt equally.

The neutrality of the situation is important. Some men do speak over others more, but this is not to do with gender but rather the power relationship between the speakers. When talking to a boss we won't butt in, but they will. In fact, when Chambers reviewed a number of linguistic studies investigating gender difference in this and other areas such as empathising, aggression and wordplay, he found an overlap of 99.75% in the way the sexes communicate. In short, no difference whatsoever!

Finally, if these supposed language differences were biological, we would expect them to be universal to all cultures. However, to take just one example, a study in the village of Gapun, Papua New Guinea, found the men pride themselves on their ability to speak indirectly and never say what they mean, while the women frequently give

voice to their anger by launching into lengthy swearing sessions - behaviour which is a reversal of the Mars and Venus stereotypes of aggression and indirectness.

Well, these myths of biological difference and communication persist and are often reinforced by our biased use of language, where we often specify a *male* nurse or a *female* doctor.

It's vital to challenge these myths because, in many cases, stereotypes around gender and communication serve to hide the structural problems in societies that maintain male power and hold back women.

You have 20 seconds to check your answers.

(pause 20 seconds)

Now listen to the text again.

(text repeated)

You have 20 seconds to check your answers.

(pause 20 seconds)

For items 11–15 listen to the dialogue. Choose the correct answer (A, B or C) to answer questions 11-15. You will hear the text only once.

You now have 25 seconds to study the questions.

(pause 25 seconds)

Christine: Who's that, then?

Dan: Oh, that's my uncle and cousins ... and that's me.

Christine: Uh? Oh yeah! How old are you there?

Dan: I must've been seven or eight, I guess.

Christine: So where is that?

Dan: Mauritius. My dad's from there originally and there was a family reunion.

Christine: Really? So where is Mauritius?

Dan: It's basically a tropical island in the Indian Ocean.

Christine: Wow! I was gonna say - you look like you're in a jungle.

Dan: Yeah, I think it's a national park. There are some more photos if you flick through.

Christine: Wow! Look at that! Is that a waterfall there?

Dan: Yeah. That's where we went. I think it might be an old volcanic crater. I'm not sure, I might be making that up.

Christine: What? And you walked through that?

Dan: Yeah. They've already hacked trails through it so it's not that hard. I mean, anywhere else and it's really thick dense jungle. You really have to stick to the tracks.

Christine: Aww. Look at him there in this one, looking all upset.

Dan: Alright, alright. There's no need to make fun of me. You would've been a bit freaked-out if you'd just been attacked by some creepy-crawly.

Christine: Aww! Shame. You poor thing.

Dan: Yeah, yeah. Actually, my mum said I moaned pretty much incessantly on that trip.

Christine: Oh gosh! Yeah! You look miserable there too, you really do! How can you not be happy there? Look at that. White sand, crystal clear water, palm trees. What's wrong with you? It's like paradise. It's amazing.

Dan: I was a little English boy, wasn't I? It was too hot. And there's scorpions and snakes and jellyfish and stuff. I was missing home!

Christine: I'd love to go there, I really would.

Dan: Yeah, well, I'd probably appreciate it more now.

Christine: You haven't been there since?

Dan: Nah, can't afford it. Dad said he'd spent years in debt from that trip! Hopefully, one day, though.

You have 1 minute to complete your answer.

This is the end of the listening comprehension part.